

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2008 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**Revised**

House Bill 505

(Delegates Heller and Robinson)

Economic Matters

Finance

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**Transit Service for Disabled Persons - Criminal History Records Check and  
Training for Persons Providing Service**

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This bill requires the Maryland Transit Administration to ensure that transit service provided in Maryland meets the special needs of disabled persons. A person employed or offered employment by MTA or a MTA contractor who provides transit service to disabled persons must obtain a State and national criminal history records checks and successfully complete a course on matters relating to appropriate accommodation, including customer service, sensitivity, and respectful and courteous treatment of all passengers, including disabled persons. The curriculum must be jointly developed by the Maryland State Department of Education and the Department of Disabilities and be approved by MTA.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None. Any additional costs associated with conducting the records checks would be offset by fees paid by the applicant. The curriculum could be developed with existing resources.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** MTA is responsible for public transportation and operates and maintains the public bus, subway, and rail systems. MTA operates and maintains the Baltimore Metro subway system, the Central Light Rail Line, and the Maryland Commuter

(MARC) Rail passenger service. MTA also provides transportation to the Baltimore metropolitan area. The Baltimore area system consists of bus and rail elements providing intra-city transportation and linking the city to points in the surrounding counties, including Anne Arundel and Baltimore counties. Commuter bus service also links Howard and Harford counties to Baltimore City, and Southern Maryland to Washington, DC.

MTA is required to development an effective and efficient transit service to meet the special needs of the elderly and disabled.

**Background:** The Criminal Justice Information System Central Repository within the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services collects, manages, and disseminates Maryland Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) for criminal justice and noncriminal justice (*e.g.*, employment and licensing) purposes.

CJIS is a fingerprint-supported system for positive identification. Fingerprints can be taken at many police departments, private organizations that have been certified by CJIS-CR, and the CJIS Customer Service Center at Reisterstown Road Plaza in Baltimore. Fingerprints may also be taken at MVA “Hazmat” sites. The CJIS Customer Service Center charges a \$20 flat fingerprinting fee and the Maryland State Police charges \$5.00 per fingerprint card to offset the cost of taking the fingerprints. Local police departments and private organizations charge varying fees for fingerprinting. One fingerprint card is required for a Maryland-only CHRI check; two fingerprint cards (Maryland/FBI) are needed for a State and national CHRI check.

When a state mandates a national check, the FBI requires that the national check be set in statute. The FBI charges a fee of \$19.25 for a national CHRI check. In the case of volunteers who work with children, the elderly, or the disabled, the FBI only charges an \$18.00 fee. The CJIS Central Repository collects the fee from the applicant and reimburses the FBI. The CJIS Central Repository is authorized by law to collect a fee for providing CHRI for purposes other than criminal justice. COMAR 12.15.01.14A sets the fee at \$18.00. Revenue from these fees is used to provide the service.

Representative costs to an applicant:

<u>State and National CHRI Check</u>	<u>Maryland CHRI Check</u>
\$19.25 FBI Fee	
18.00 CJIS Fee	\$18.00 CJIS Fee
<u>20.00</u> Fingerprint Fee	<u>20.00</u> Fingerprinting Fee
<b>\$57.25 Total</b>	<b>\$38.00 Total</b>

Maryland Transit Administration employees, employees of contractors, and participants in the MTA Taxi Access program must undergo a State criminal history records check.

The Maryland Transit Administration currently provides training for new and existing bus operators via an Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) overview during orientation for new operators and a formal course in the ADA and Sensitivity Towards Persons With Disabilities during their initial training to qualify as bus operators. A refresher course of this information occurs during a bus operator's recertification. In addition, the training curriculum for new operators includes a customer relations module supported by an interactive computer program, and during a bus operator's recertification, a module entitled "Maintaining A Peaceful Bus Environment" includes effective communication through "words," "tone," and "body language," reducing stress, active listening, and communicating with customers in difficult situations.

**State Fiscal Effect:** The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services advises that expenditures associated with fingerprinting and criminal history records checks would be offset by the fees paid by the applicant.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Disabilities, Public Service Commission, Maryland Department of Transportation, Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 14, 2008  
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